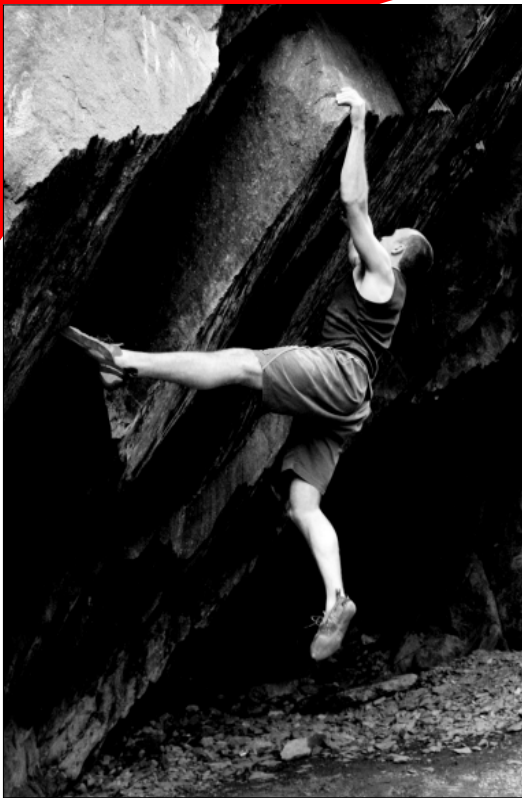




MIDLANDS AREA NEWS

Issue 005 27th August 2008

Brought to you by the BMC's Midland Area Meeting.



Iain McKenzie, Midlands Area Chair, Forest Rock.

Welcome to the Fifth issue of the BMC's Midlands Area News. It has been put together by the volunteers of your local Area Meeting to keep you up to date about Midlands walking and climbing. We are a happy bunch who are involved with crag clean ups, guidebook work, rebolting and access work. We would love to see you at our next meeting (see next page for details). We are a "doing, not talking" kind of meeting, and we are here to represent you.

If you would like to get involved or contribute to this Newsletter email: iain.a.mckenzie@btinternet.com or come along to the Open Area Meetings.

Next Area Open Meeting

Date: 4th September 2008
Venue: Old Edwardians Sports Club, Solihull.
Time: 19:30hrs
Free Food all welcome.

National Council News by Fiona Devine

The 11th National Council was held on Saturday 14 June 2008 at YHA Borrowdale, Lake District. I am pleased to report lots of good news items. Subjects discussed included:

A Clubs Working Group - National Council has agreed to set up a Clubs Working Group to look in detail at the relationship between clubs and the BMC, and to identify further improvements required. The Group will operate for a fixed period (14 June to 29 November 2008) and will report its findings to the National Council meeting at the end of November. Its remit is to: Clarify how clubs see their relationship with the BMC and what mutual help we can offer each other.

Identify and recommend practical ways in which the BMC's work and services for clubs can be improved and developed. Consider what is a fair balance of subscriptions between club members and individual members and how it can be administered.

The Working Group will appoint its own chair and will decide how it wishes to do its business (meetings frequency, use of conference calls, email discussion etc). Clubs should be receiving an Email or letter shortly with this good news.

Hut Renovation Fund

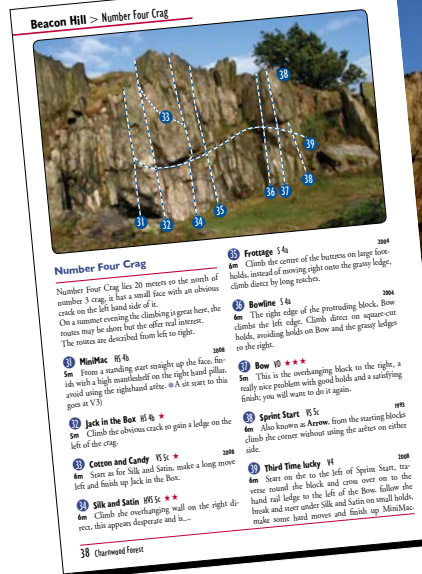
The finance committee are looking at setting aside a small pot of money to assist clubs renovating their huts. It is still early days and so no details can be given. It should be noted that it is only likely to receive support from National Council if can be shown to be of benefit for all members. The message is "huts" need to be made available to all BMC members, not just club members.

BMC Strategic Plan 2009 & Sport England Strategy: Sports England has additional funding available focusing specifically on clubs, volunteers and coaching. A Funding application must be made by 29 August. In line with the strategic plan the BMC is also to look at extend the case for funding to support regional staff working with schools, climbing walls and clubs. Climbing as an Olympic Sport - BMC Areas are to be consulted and asked to report back to National Council. Note Sport England support could be jeopardised if the BMC decided to express opposition to the Olympics.

New rep for UIAA Council -Doug Scott is to replace Mark Vallance when he steps down from his post at the UIAA General Assembly in October 2008.

Next meeting - Sunday 14 September 2008 at Leeson House Outdoor Centre, Swanage.

Front Cover Picture:
 Richard (Bic) Fieldman at Beacon Hill



Local Action Hero...

Introducing BMC Members who give up their free time to help promote climbing and hill walking... This edition introduces Tilley Tebbutt who has been volunteering on the Mobile Climbing wall to get experience all summer...

The what and why of climbing, walking and general outdoor life and why I want to work in the outdoors can only be described by my personal experiences. For me it started with family holiday trips to Adventure International in Cornwall when I was 10 and these continued till I was 18.

I was captivated in a way which drew me to the outdoors, in my young eyes this was Adventure, I was continually stepping into the unknown, although I had an awareness of danger, more often than not in my young mind this was more an imagined danger than a real danger but still my annual 5 day holiday to Cornwall became everything I looked forward to, I knew then that I had found something I loved doing, and something I was good at, I just needed a way of developing it and want to give something back.

I have worked my way through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, having achieved the Gold Award I now help as a Young Leader, this was my first steps into the beginnings of working towards working in an outdoor environment. Having registered with MLTE for both the SPA and ML award my next big step was working with Mark at the Tower Climbing Centre, out and about in the parks of Leicestershire with the Mobile Climbing Wall, this has taken up much of my summer but I have thoroughly enjoyed my experience and have seen a real gain in what a climbing experience, however short, can have on a child.

By the end of their climb I hope that they can take away some of the same feelings of life and adventure that I have over my years climbing, walking and generally getting out there and enjoying the great outdoors.



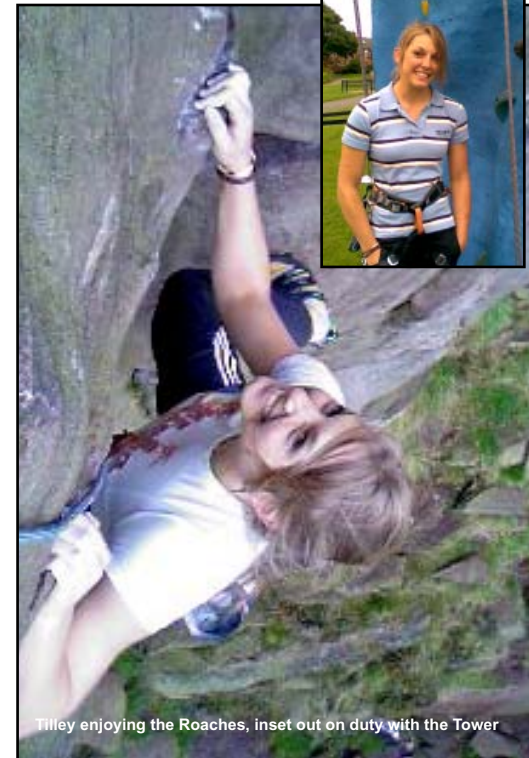
The Leicestershire Guide book finally begins to take shape.

Much of the hard work has been done and it is now a case of starting the layout although there are few areas still in need of writing up and a few areas where access issues are still unclear.

It would be fair to mention at this point that a special thanks to Robin Richmond for his huge efforts along with David and Jon Evans.

If anyone would like to get involved in helping out we will be arranging a few visits to various crags and venues to clean them up, get some photos and also finish writing up the various bits, then please do not hesitate to contact me,

Via the email at bottom of page.



Tilley enjoying the Roaches, inset out on duty with the Tower



As featured in the last Newsletter I have the honour of publishing this article and photos from Tim. Hope you all enjoy and find it inspiring. All Photos Tim Redding Collection.

An Alaskan Adventure - by Tim Redding

Its mid April 2008 and here I am looking out of the kitchen window of a timber frame cabin, out to a world very different to my own back in England. The lake at the bottom of the driveway is frozen, snow covered and a light breeze blows from the north. Snow fall's late into the evening which obscures the view of the Talkeetna Mountains. It will be 18 below tonight & 7 above tomorrow. Break up is coming & the tourist season with it.

We are gaining 6 minutes of light each day, this being the catalyst for many until permanent long summer days are here again.

Yesterday I witnessed a Tailor craft plane being changed from ski's to floats & takeoff on the snow leveling two perfect 'v' shaped grooves along the lake. The pilot, a friend of ours, is a guide and is taking clients out to Kodiak Island and so in preparation for his return the floats are put on early and the plane will be ready and waiting on the water in late may after the ice is melted.

This is the land of the Sun Dog's, Northern Lights, mountains and wilderness. It is Alaska the place of my dreams.

I think back to when it all started over four years ago.

An Engineer with a good career, in the Midlands, a house my wife & I could call our own. It was what I was good at & being grateful for it, kept me there.

I always loved the outdoors even from a small child & made sure that each week would bring a new excursion. But yet I new that something was wrong, or at least something was missing, that there needed to be a change. Having ignored this for over 14 years my wife Deb knew that we had to do something. "Take me away" she said, over one to many glasses of wine.

That was it, we needed to travel, see what we were missing and remove this dark cloud over our heads. We have some friends who were seasoned travelers so asking for there advice seemed the way forward.

"Get the lonely planet guide books, pack your rucksack then unpack half of it, don't think, just do it" was the reply. Wow I wasn't prepared for that, but it really is the only way. It wasn't long before we put our lives in the UK on hold, packed all the contents of the house into the garage for storage, rented the house within a few weeks and finally broke the news to our parents.

We wanted to start our adventure in America or Canada & there seemed to be many volunteer placements to be found on the Web for interesting projects that helped with board & rent. For that matter we found almost any place in the world had all kinds of projects, like Hydro electric power in the Khumbu region of Nepal for example.

To cut a long story short we decided to start in Alaska and travel down through North America, British Columbia and then Central America. Not realizing at the time that our very first stop Talkeetna, Alaska would be the focal point of our living two years later. Brian McCullough, one person we found on the net, a local stone mason, photographer & guide who lives in Talkeetna, had plenty of projects in the area for us and he introduced us to the local community.

Alpine Ascents president (AAI) Todd Burleson was one such person, who needed someone to rear his seven, new 4 week old baby Himalayan Yaks. (Potential trekking idea for the local mountains). Deb was just the person with some farming experience.

I spent most of my time with Brian & sometimes tagging along with his trekking tours looking out for moose, caribou, bears and of course some glorious hiking.

We soon realized that this could quite easily be a good place to settle with making so many new friends. But there was still this idea in our minds that we needed to continue with our travels and pressing issues of our visa's running out shortly. Before we knew it, it was October and we were forced to leave anyway by snow, we headed south from Tok Junction, Alaska through the Yukon Territories and into British

Columbia, Canada. Sleeping in the back of our truck and waking up to frost over our sleeping bags!

We spent the last month in the U.S.A traveling as far and seeing as much as we could fit in before flying back to England for a brief pit-stop of a couple of months.

Our next trip would take us 4,500 miles cycling around New Zealand, Australia & south east Asia for another 8 months before one of my knees started making some unhealthy sounds. So unfortunately Nepal was taken off the list & we decided to call it a day & go home.

Almost immediately after we arrived home we found out we were expecting a baby and nine months and 10 long extra days we finally got our beautiful little girl, Lucy.

During this time Todd Burleson, knowing that we wanted to return to Alaska with a view to stay, contacted us to offer me a position with AAI as a trainee guide and work with the Yaks. Of course we jumped at the opportunity and the long process of applying for visas began. At first we thought that getting the visa's would be easy, but soon realized that I either didn't

fit in to a specific category or AAI were going to be bogged down with mammoth amounts of paperwork for US job market research & applicant screening etc. After week's of head scratching I found a passage referring to an H3 visa, allowing two years training, but the catch was that I needed to prove that the training I required needed to be unattainable in the UK. Luckily the BMC agreed to support my case & wrote a letter to the U.S immigration service stating that the mountaineering conditions in Alaska are significantly different from those in the UK, and therefore it has to offer training opportunities which the UK does not have. The different conditions include; glaciation's, high altitude and extreme temperatures. Finally, in January 2007 we got the go ahead. (Thank you BMC)

We said our fond farewells to family and friends again and made for Alaska.

We arrived April 15th 2007 and almost immediately I was plunged into summer season preparations. The guides were due to arrive by the beginning of May for both training groups & Denali (Mt.McKinley) expeditions, a lot of work still needed to be done. I was assigned too senior guide Willi Prittl, a tall, slender, man with long pony tail & beard. He seemed to have a dry cense of humor and for the most part calm, collected and patient. All was well until about 2 hrs in to my first day, when I picked up a probe pole & started messing with it, trying to figure out which tent must be missing a pole. Meanwhile Willi watched with total disbelief and let me stew over this small conundrum for a while until he got board, then in a loud voice, said "what the f@#\$%@%\$ are you doing? "I don't believe it, they sent me another"! I clearly impressed the man. But soon we were getting along just great.

With obvious gaps in my mountaineering experience, Willi started my training from scratch, which given the work load was amazing, amazing; no matter how long the day was he always explained everything we did.

"Attention to detail" was Willi's motto.

Each expedition's group gear would be laid out on the floor of



the hanger, color coded, checked, cleaned and ready for the guides to admire; then placed it in the same color coded duffel ready to leave for the mountain, weather permitting, that day. No burrs on pickets, no dull ice screw's, tents rigged, ropes coiled equally, each MSR stove would be fired up & tweaked to get the most out of it. Nothing would be missed.

The guides are expected to return the gear in the same way, no high camp exchanges with other teams, no exauesesex-cuses for these guides.

When we would be weighing in the gear & food he would be explaining about, what's the best & latest equipment? When we packed food he would explain about good dietary habits, nutrition, good & bad cooking habits, hygiene hygiene and the guides little menu tweaks.

When we drove the clients to the airfield he would be talking about the weather patterns, names of peaks, geographical geography & climbing history in all surrounding ranges.

Willi also introduced me to the staff at the Talkeetna Rangers station & park service, with which I would be closely working, making sure clients where signed in, briefed, progressing up the mountain ok, returning safely, removing waste off the mountain and disposed of it correctly.

By the end of the Denali season my head was buzzing with all this new information.

There was a two week gap, then the Sherpa arrived from Nepal, with 22 Everest Summits between the two guys, this was the start of something totally different for Alaska. The Yaks were considerably bigger than when we last saw them and the bull had developed some serious attitude. When we first arrived he and I had to have a few man to man talks and



he eventually saw things my way. The way. The first ever guided Yak tours in Alaska was going to happen with the animals that my wife reared 4 years prior.

With no motorized transport allowed in the Denali national park, our fury friends have a lot of potential. But currently the 8000 squared Talkeetna range would have to do. The Sherpa did the brushing, grooming, made adjustments to saddles, then and then trek the local area.

Some of their ideas and skills I picked up quickly, others like adjusting hardwood saddles would take years of experience to master.

It was essential to get the saddles fitted just right as the Yaks are carrying large loads and constant grooming and handling etc to keep them calm and used to people as they will be in close proximity to the clients as we walk across the Talkeetna mountains. From moon shadow lake to Shadow Lake to Sheepback and then vice versa.

It has to be said Yaks are not the brightest creatures and three of them, and it's usually the same three that get into trouble, learned a painful lesson when they decided to take on a porcupine and each one ended up with a rosette of about 40+ barbed quills firmly sticking out of their soft noses, one even had them in her hind hock, I guess that was when she must have launched the poor thing out of the corral! An hour later we had successfully got all the quills removed and had three very sorry looking yaks.

This is going to be interesting!

The Sherpa's and I walked the Yaks into the mountains a week ahead of the trip, this was a worrying time, as the dense forest was ideal habitat for grizzly bears & although we were unlikely to startle any bears as the noise of the Tibetan yak bells would let them know we were around no one was sure how the yaks would react if they did see or even smell the bears. Fortunately footprints were seen & noises were heard but Yak was not on the menu that week!

The clients & Todd Burleson were flown in by float plane to meet us at 'Moon shadow' a large lake at about 1000 mtrs in elevation and spent their first night at camp. Each party enjoyed 6 days of trekking, pack free, viewing wild animals in untouched dramatic landscape, 2500 mtr peaks, large talus & small hanging glaciers. Eating good food like fresh salmon, crab, spare ribs & lots of salads washed down with wine before settling down for the night, every meal cooked fresh for them and not a boil-in-the-bag meal in sight! Before we returned home the same route as we entered, passing through the dense forest again, knowing we were probably being watched at some point.

After a few days of packing & cleaning the Sherpa went back to Nepal and so every day since then, Deb or I feed, groom and saddle the yaks ready for this year tours.

The rest of the autumn and winter, my family & I enjoyed a more relaxed approach to mountaineering and life in general. Living in this wonderful oak Cabin, rent free by AAI with Willi Pritti as a neighbor on his modest 130 acre plot.

The snows came in November & by Christmas we had 3 feet on the ground & the temperature regularly dropping below -30.

This was ideal training for me; firstly I could camp directly outside the cabin & get comfortable with cooking & sleeping at these temperatures.

Secondly; Willi & I would head off to small local peaks for a couple of days at a time, in the Talkeetna or Chugach ranges of around 2000 mtrs. The plan being to show me different types of snow packs.

Alaskan snow is so unusual with its ability to evaporate at the base & reform at the surface in the form of frost at extreme cold temperatures (TG snow) making it very unstable snow. Other items also covering were avalanche hazards, different alpine ski terrain, building igloos, snow caves, snow walls, crevasse rescue. I routinely practiced the basics again like kicking steps, posture, holding your axe or ski poles correctly, moving on steeper ground, and self arrest.

Ice climbing is easily accessible with just a short hike to most spots. Typical to Alaska life even the ice is different as it is much harder & less plastic at -20 or -30, to a point that ice screws would hardly drive in to the ice, making a irritating squeak as it turned.

We all enjoy the cross country skiing, I get to carry Lucy in the pack well wrapped from the cold, and then it's a case of just picking a direction to go in. Just being careful of natural springs under the ice (spider holes) on the lakes or if you're in the woods avoid upsetting moose that like to use the nicely groomed trails rather than trudge through deep snow.

Yesterday we skied alongside fresh grizzly tracks as we followed a trail across a frozen swamp. It's the first we have seen of the bears this year and a sure sign that spring is here.

We have four neighbors all of which have their own light aircraft and we are fortunate to get regular trips up, when the wind is calm and there are no thermals, to take a look around. In the summer it's quite a sight to see from the air when the small creeks and some of the many lakes turn bright red as the salmon arrive at their final destination to spawn this also means good bear watching as they catch an easy meal of tired or dead fish on the shore line.



In winter it's much easier to see the moose from the air and follow all the various animal tracks left in the snow. You can also get a better idea of the surprising amount of marshland and vast spruce and birch forests. On a clear day you can see the Denali range to the North, the Talkeetna Mountains to the East, the 'Sleeping Lady' mountain range to the west and further south the Chugach range.

Willi and I are planning a bigger ascent this year of Marcus Baker at 4000 mtrs in the Chugach as part of my training, plus two trips into the Alaska Range, we are still discussing the route to take for that.

Once again we are starting to get ready for the Denali Season & there may be a chance that I get to go out with clients this year.

Having passed my wilderness first responder course I'm now on call with the park service to help with search & rescue.

What are the plans for the future?

Well, my visa is temporary and we have to return to the UK at the end of the two years. But this does not mean that I have to stop working for AAI, as I can be assigned a special skills visa for seasonal work, plus possible work in South America (Aconcagua) to start with, but this is yet to be agreed.

I would also like to go through the normal channels & complete my training in the UK with my ML assessment, then onto the WML which shouldn't be a problem given my recent experience. After that who knows!!

I hope this article can be inspirational and possibly helpful for some of you who are thinking of making big changes in your lives. It is without doubt the best decision we ever made and we would highly recommend it. Just remember not to gamble with your health or safety.

Bewdley Mountaineering Club

Bewdley and District Mountaineering Club is a small group of mountaineering enthusiasts based on the towns of Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport, about 20 miles from Birmingham. We are BMC affiliated, but have an informal and friendly atmosphere.

We cater for both climbers and mountain walkers and people of all levels and abilities are welcome to join.

The Club's main activities are centred around a programme of hut meets (with the occasional camping meet) most of which are in North Wales or the Lake District, but club members also make arrangements to go further afield, e.g. Scotland or the Alps. Recent trips have included Skye and Kintail (May 2007) and Glen Strathfarrar (October 2007).

The Club's website at www.bewdleymountaineeringclub.co.uk has recently been expanded.

We meet each week on Thursdays at around 9.45pm at the pub, The Great Western, Kidderminster Road, Bewdley and new members are always welcome.

Club Meet: Thursday's

Time: 21:45

Venue: The Great Western, Kidderminster Road, Bewdley.

Contact Name: Vince Harrison

Telephone: 01299 871724

Web Address: www.bewdleymountaineeringclub.co.uk

Email: vince.harrison@btinternet.com

Bowline Climbing Club

The Leicester based and BMC affiliated Bowline Climbing Club has been established for more than fifty years and is an active and friendly club with over 100 members, holding regular meets throughout the UK and further afield. We also own a hut just outside Llanberis.

Characterised by a healthy spirit of competition and no small amount of p*s taking, the Bowline exists to foster a love of the outdoors, not just in climbing but in hill walking, ice climbing, mountaineering, cycling, running and skiing and the many other activities which our members participate in. These activities are enjoyed at many different levels within the club, so there really is 'something for everyone'!

Although there are many meets based further afield, most weekends there are people going up to the Peak District for a day of fun on the grit, or limestone. In the winter we generally try to get away for at least one week sport climbing on hot rock and/or a week skiing. We also have an active program of evening events in the week, including running, cycling and climbing.

Club Meet: Wednesday Night

Time: From 21:00 onwards

Venue: Cow & Plough, Stoughton, Leicester.

Contact Name: Zoe Pickering

Telephone: 07709 337996

Web Address: www.bowline.f9.co.uk

Email: meetsec@gmail.com

Ceunant Mountaineering Club

We are We are a long established climbing club based in the Midlands (centred on Birmingham). We number about 150 members. A mixture of all sorts. From big range mountaineers to rock climbers, sports climbers, skiers, ski tourers, walkers and scramblers.

We organise a varied program of meets and longer trips around the UK, Europe & occasionally international. In previous years, these have included Chamonix, Alps, Lundy, Italian Dolomites, Corsica and the Canadian Rockies to name just a few. We also have an active programme of social events like canoe trips on the river severn, curry evenings and slide shows. For more details See the "Meets and Events" page on our website

New members are always welcome, regardless of experience, an interest in climbing, walking, camping, biking, skiing or any other mountain sport is all you need. See the "getting involved" page on our website. scramblers.

Club Meet: Every Wednesday

Time: 21:30 - 23:00

Venue: Spotted Dog, Corner of Alcester St & Warwick St, Digberth, Birmingham, B12 0NH

Contact Name: Debbie Sharp

Telephone: 01746 862 011

Web Address: www.ceunant.org

Email: secretary@ceunant.org

Coventry Mountaineering Club

The purpose of the club is to encourage every branch of mountaineering.

The main activities of the club are a varied series of weekend meets held every two to three weeks in the popular and also the less well known climbing and walking areas of the UK and beyond. In winter we generally base our meets in mountain huts and cottages and in summer we normally camp.

The club owns a hut, or cottage, at Corris in southern Snowdonia, which is available to members. Corris is close to Cader Idris, the Arans and Plynlimon. The Corris area is much quieter than the Snowdon area. It offers good hill walking, forest trails, mountain biking trails and rock climbing.

It is quite common to go out for a day and see no more than a handfull of people.

Club Meet: Socially every Wed evening

Time: 21:30 - 23:00

Venue: London Road Social Club, Paradise St., Coventry.

Contact Name: Mike

Telephone: 024 76597125

Web Address: www.coventry-mc.fsnet.co.uk (new site shortly)

Email: mike_o_bike@yahoo.co.uk

Coventry & Warwickshire Red Rope

The club is based in Coventry and Warwickshire, with members in Coventry, Kenilworth, Leamington, Warwick, Stratford and around.

Our members go hill-walking and scrambling, country-walking, mountaineering, and mountain-biking – all year round. We have regular weekend trips to the hills, such as North Wales, or the Lakes, day trips, local walks, a regular pub meeting once a month and evening walks in the summer.

We are a regional group of National Red Rope Socialist Walking and Climbing Club, bringing together walkers and climbers who have socialist and like-minded ethics. The club is organised in regional groups around the UK, and if you join you can take part in walks and trips organised by other regions, giving you a wide choice of locations and activities.

Have a look at our website to see our planned activities for 2008.

Club Meet: Socially, the first Tuesday in the month.

Time: 20:30 – 22:30

Venue: Virgins & Castle pub, Kenilworth.

Contact Name: Bronwen Reid

Telephone: 01926 314634

Web Address: www.redrope-warks.org.uk

Email: info@redrope-warks.org.uk

Hinckley Mountaineering Club

We are an active club that exist for the benefit of the members. With a full programme of activities there's ample opportunity for walking, scrambling, rock climbing, mountaineering, mountain biking, skiing and socialising.

Check out this website to find out more, or come and have a drink with us on Thursday evening.

New members whether beginners or experienced are always welcome.

Club Meet: Every Thursday Night

Time: From 21:00

Venue: The Holywell Inn. London Road, Hinckley.

Web Address: www.hinckleymc.org

Leicester Red Rope

The club is based in Leicester.

Our members go climbing, hill-walking and scrambling, mountaineering and country-walking. We have regular weekend trips to the hills, such as North Wales, or the Lakes, day trips, local walks, a regular pub meeting once a month and evening walks in the summer.

We are a regional group of National Red Rope Socialist Walking and Climbing Club, bringing together walkers and climbers who have socialist and like-minded ethics. The club is organised in regional groups around the UK, and if you join you can take part in walks and trips organised by other regions, giving you a wide choice of locations and activities.

This is a list of clubs locally in the Midlands. All the clubs on the BMC database were emailed and asked if they wished to be included in this list, if a club is not here, they did not get back to us. If a club wishes to be included, please check your details are correct on the BMC database and email us direct.

Have a look at our national website to find out more about the club.

We meet socially the first Tuesday of every month 9 pm at the Swan and Rushes (near Leicester Royal Infirmary)

Club Meet: Climbing, every Wednesday

Time: 18:00 - 19:30

Venue: Moat Community College.

Contact Name: Pravin

Telephone: Mob. 07796988488 Tel. 01162366852

Web Address: www.redrope.org.uk

Email: pravski@yahoo.com

Mercian Mountaineering Club

The Mercian is an active and friendly club catering for mountaineers, climbers and walkers of all abilities. Social activities are based in Birmingham, but we have members based all over the Midlands and further afield. We have members from all walks of life, and ranging in age from their early 20s to 70+ and still going strong!

We have mountain meets roughly once a fortnight. These normally attract a good mix of people: there will be people wanting to do things ranging from a walk to a scramble to easy climbing to hard stuff up to the lower E grades, and novices at any activity are always welcome. Mountain biking has also taken off recently, especially on wet days. Club members usually arrange trips abroad too – last summer saw trips to the Alps and to the Dolomites, and there have been several skiing and snowboarding trips in the last few years too.

Our weekly pub socials take place in the Old Crown in Digbeth on Thursday evenings from 9:30pm, usually following a visit to the climbing wall. One social a month is a special event, such as a slideshow, a quiz or a photo competition. We also arrange other socials once a month – outings such as bowling and meals out. Full details are available on our website.

If you think we sound like your sort of club, get in touch and pop along to meet us. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Club Meet: Thursday Evenings

Time: From 19:30 (Creation) & From 21:30 (The Old Crown)

Venue: Creation Climbing Wall, Moseley & The Old Crown, Digbeth

Contact Name: Rebecca Blyth

Telephone: 07799 207990

Web Address: www.mercianmc.org.uk

Email: newcomer@mercianmc.org.uk

NORTH LEICESTERSHIRE MOUNTAIN CLUB

We are a mountain club rather than a mountaineering club and so enjoy all activities associated with the outdoors environment. These include: Climbing, Walking, Mountaineering, Caving and Mountain Biking.

We are child and dog friendly, as long as they are well behaved and you look after them!

In the dark winter evenings we have a weekly indoor climbing meeting at the Tower Climbing Centre (Tuesday's), on summer evenings might go to a local crag or quarry or maybe up to Wildcat Tor at Matlock.

Club Meet: Tuesday and Thursday Evenings

Time: From 19:00 (Tuesday) & From 21:00 (Thursday)

Venue: The Tower on Tuesday & White Hart public house in Quorn.

Contact Name: Adrian Thorpe

Telephone: 0116 2892421

NUNEATON MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

We are a friendly club involved with all kinds of mountaineering activity including Climbing, Scrambling, Hill walking and back packing.

Club Meet: Thursday Evenings

Time: From 20:30

Venue: The Attleborough Liberal club, Nuneaton.

Contact Name: Andrew Holder

Telephone: 01827 717648

Web Address: www.nunmc.org

SOLIHULL MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

The Club is based in the Solihull area of the West Midlands with members from all round the area. We are actively involved in many mountain sports including mountaineering, scrambling, hill walking, rock climbing and mountain biking to name but a few. We welcome anyone with an interest in mountains.

Although we have a number of very experienced rock climbers in the club we also cater for novices with regular ad hoc meets targeted at their needs.

The club has both a structured programme of events and an informal set of events that are arranged at short notice. Check out the Activities section of the website, message board or turn up on a club evening for up-to-date details.

Club Meet: Every Tuesday many members go to the Creation Wall climbing centre at 582 Moseley Rd, Birmingham. Check the website for location details. If you want to make contact with us there its probably best to get in touch beforehand to make sure we meet up on the night.

Thursday night is club night. Although there may not always be a committee member there every Thursday, we guarantee to have someone there on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays in the month.

Time: 21:30 - 22:00

Venue: The Old Edwardians Sports Club is at the junction of Streetsbrook Road and Olton Lane, in Solihull. A map showing the location of the Old Ed's can be found on the website.

Contact Name: Rob Trezise

Telephone: Rob on 07976 840679

Web Address: www.solihullmc.org.uk

Email: See Web Site

WARWICK CLIMBING CLUB

Warwick Climbing Club is based in the west midlands, so if you want to go rock climbing, mountaineering, scrambling or hill walking, you have come to the right place!

The club have approximately 80 members drawn from Warwick, Leamington Spa, Stratford-upon-Avon, Coventry and the surrounding areas.

We aim to offer a friendly atmosphere where local climbers can meet so come along one evening and say hello.

The club organises outdoor trips about three times a month during the summer months and less frequently during winter. Have a look at our website to find out our planned activities for 2007.

Club Meet: Every Monday & Wednesday

Time: 19:00 - 21:30

Venue: St Nicholas Park Leisure Centre in Warwick.

Contact Name: Dave Button

Telephone: 07775 582958

Web Address: www.warwickclimbingclub.co.uk

Email: info@warwickclimbingclub.co.uk

WARWICK MOUNTAINS

The University of Warwick Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club is an active and open club for students and staff at the University of Warwick.

Catering for people of all abilities with a wide range of interests, we go on weekend trips every three weeks to Britain's mountainous regions.

Whether you want to take an easier walk through beautiful mountain scenery, or have a technical day on the mountain we can accommodate your interests.

We also run two annual trips: one winter trip to Scotland for winter walking and climbing, and a summer alpine tour.

From walkers to alpinists, this is the club if you love being in the mountains.

Club Meet: As above, three weekend trips per term, plus an annual Scottish winter trip and summer Alpine trip. We also have social events which tend to be fortnightly.

Web Address: www.warwickmountains.co.uk

Email: info@warwickmountains.co.uk

WEST MIDLANDS RED ROPE

The club is based in the West Midlands, with members in and around Birmingham, Solihull and Wolverhampton.

Our members go hill-walking, mountain walking and country-walking. There are day walks, summer evening walks, weekend trips to the hills and twice a year there is a social meeting. A recent addition has been an annual four day backpacking trip.

We are a regional group of Red Rope, a national socialist walking and climbing club. This brings together walkers and climbers who have socialist and like-minded views. If you join Red Rope you can take part in walks and trips organised by other regions, giving you a wide choice of locations and activities.

Have a look at our national website to find out more about the club..

Club Meet: contact below for further info, details of programme.

Time: as arranged

Venue: n/a

Contact Name: Gill Cox

Telephone: 01902 331233

Web Address: www.redrope.org.uk

Email: barrier@waitrose.com (local contact)

WEST BROMWICH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

WBMC is a friendly mountaineering club based in the heart of the West Midlands. We welcome all kinds of mountaineering activity, including climbing, hill walking and fell running.

We welcome experienced mountaineers and complete beginners alike.

Club Meet: Every Thursday evening & Coach Meet 2nd Sunday (rarely Saturday) of the month

Time: From around 9pm or 8pm if there is a talk/slide show (7am for coach)

Venue: "The Globe", Reform Street, West Bromwich (opposite the Police Station)

Contact Name: Jonathan Howells (Membership Secretary), John Eadon (Secretary)

Telephone: 07739 694079 (Jon) 01547 540466 (John)

Web Address: www.wbmc.org

Email: jaejed@hotmail.com

WREKIN MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

The Wrekin Mountaineering Club is a very active Club and friendly Club based in Shropshire, but includes members from all over the Midlands and other parts of the Country.

Meets are held every 2nd Sunday, and weekend and longer meets are held throughout the year in all major climbing areas in the UK and Europe. Members are active in all areas of mountain hill walking, rock climbing, bouldering and winter mountaineering.

Membership is for persons over 18, and our rock climbers and mountain walkers are of all levels of ability, all willing to pass on their skills and experience to new members.

We are a BMC affiliated Club, and have excellent discounts with National and local retailers.

Club Meet: Socially 1st Tuesday of each month but indoor wall and outdoor meets every Tuesday

Time: 1st Tuesday of the Month 20:30-22:00

Venue: George and Dragon, High Street, Much Wenlock.

Contact Name: Bob Mitchell

Telephone: 01746 761696

Web Address: www.wrekinmc.co.uk

Email: mitch@wrekinmc.co.uk

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER M.C.

Membership to the club is restricted to students, staff and graduates from the University of Leicester.

Whether you are climbing in the High E grades, or don't know a karabiner from a friend, then the Mountaineering Club is for you.

We provide the means, equipment and safe instruction from experienced club members. The club runs regular trips to the Peak District, Lake District, Snowdonia Yorkshire, Portland and Pembrokeshire.

New members are readily welcomed and you can get involved as much as you like. All you need to join is enthusiasm. In return we promise to offer you a year packed with fun and adventure.

Club Meet: Tuesday Night and Wednesday Afternoon

Time: 19:30 - 21:00 (Tuesday) & 13:30 - 15:00 (Wednesday)

Venue: Moat Climbing Wall

Contact Name: Steve Elliff

Email: su-climbing@le.ac.uk



Ceunant Mountaineering Club Hut



Parle Non

This is an account of a climb that three of us did last October in the Costa Blanca. A bunch of us from Warwick Climbing Club were staying at the Orange House, Finestrat.

Rich "Orange" Mayfield has done a lot of work and has fairly recently developed a new sector on the Toix sea cliffs. The easiest route in this "Pirates of the Caribbean" sector is Parle. Here is what happened when three of us, Adrian, ChrisW and me (ChrisH) went off to do this route.

The day was fine, sunny with only a little high cloud. We headed for Toix, from the car parking below Toix West, it is a kilometre walk in, along a partially existent path dotted with (very) small cairns.

We passed the abseil stakes at the top of Magical Mystery Tour. From this point, the path becomes even fainter but we had no difficulty finding the massive twin holes in the cliff top that are the entry into the Pirate of the Caribbean sector. It was 11:00 am, and there are three pitches of twenty metres climbing. Plenty of time, should be back up by 15:00 at the latest, so no need to take the packs, water etc.

The abseil in is pretty scary. It is sixty metres of free space into a huge cave, open at the ocean side. It is equivalent to abseiling from the top of the inner dome of St Paul's cathedral, same distance and similar geometry

I went first, dropping off into space and gently spinning round, watching the huge, over-hanging rock walls close above. It seemed to take forever to reach the base of the cave, passing endless walls of rock. It was like my dreams of the night before, which my overexcited brain had filled with images of towering limestone crags, over-hanging and kilometres high.

I quickly got off the rope at the bottom, worrying about the hot metal on the nylon. There is a huge cave down there, about ten metres above the sea; forty people could hold a party there. As I waited for the others, I lay back looking straight up at the massive rock dome above and tried not to think how many tons of rock were hanging improbably overhead. Or how much longer they were going to go on doing so. Adrian came next, picking up an impressive rope burn on his arm en route, and finally ChrisW.

We picked the line up the rock wall to our left. High above, we could see a traverse back towards the cave, rising left to right. That must be the second pitch, and the third will be in the top of the cave. The plan was for Adrian to lead the first pitch, me the second and ChrisW the third.

The first pitch started with a hard pull on small holds. Belaying three metres below Adrian, I heard a sharp crack, and thought he had snapped a hold off. Actually, he had popped a tendon on the second finger of his left hand. This was not good on the very first move of the first pitch.

Adrian decided to aid the first move and climbed half-way up the first pitch before deciding that his injured hand was not going to let him carry on through the delicate middle section. I lowered Adrian back down, and ChrisW went up to lead the pitch. Adrian and I followed, it seemed hard for a 5+. All three of us resorted to aiding the first move.

My lead. I climbed easily up and left to discover another and better belay on the next ledge so paused to bring the other two up to there. Then I re-rigged and carried on.

There was a line of bolts going straight up into hugely over-hung and desperate territory above but I was aiming for the rising traverse on the crack line we saw from the ground. It was not visible from the belay ledge however; I needed to get around a crumbling arête to reach it.

I stepped around on to a large hold, from there I could pinch a big flake with my left hand, flag my right foot and clip the first bolt. First rope in, second rope in, then stand up and make one powerful move to gain a hand-jam in the end of the crack and clip the second bolt. So far so good. The first unpleasant surprise was that the crack is soaking wet, water was absolutely running out of it! It was smooth, wet and slopes downwards.

Even worse, I could not pull the ropes though to clip the second bolt! Looking down I could see the problem. Clipping the first bolt at full reach, I had managed to clip the two ropes running through the crab in opposite directions and fouling each other. How the hell did I do that?

There was only one thing to do. Pausing only to shout "F*** !" at the top my voice half-a-dozen times, I jumped off.

Hanging back at the first bolt, I clipped a sling in to the bolt, got my weight off the rope and reclipped. Properly this time.

Then I had to re-do the move up to the start of the crack,

this was not starting well. I made the second clip and got my weight on it for a minute (now I had already blown the on-sight!). This crack looked dammed hard. It was about fist-width, rises up and to the right at a shallow angle, and it was literally dripping wet. The rock bulges below and then cuts away into a massive overhanging wall.

"Come on!" I told myself "It is 6a, it can't be as hard as it looks. What about footholds?" There were footholds, but they were small and sloping, and of course, they were below the bulge. You could not see them from above.

I decided I would just have to hope there would be good holds in the crack when I got there.

The next half hour or so was a struggle along the crack using a succession of hand and fist jams. I was getting no help from my feet, and I could not get the weight off my arms. There was a lot of grunting and groaning! Apparently, it all sounded pretty interesting to the guys back on the belay ledge, who could not see what was happening, of course.

Reaching along the crack, my right hand found a decent hold! At least a finger joint deep, it was something I could use to hold myself on to the rock with. A pity it was full of muddy water, but I was not fussy by then. I made the next clip. Despite frantic searching, there did not appear to any more holds anywhere. Dints, under clings, pinches— if they has been there I would have found them. I reluctantly abandoned my precious, soggy handhold for another fist jam.

I made a mental note to have harsh words with Rich bloody Orange bloody Mayfield. "He may be climbing 8a but he is losing the plot if he thinks this is a 6a!"

It probably took an hour to make the fifth bolt. The next move looked like; reach as far right as you can get, hand-jam, another hand-jam with the left in front, left foot high to a sloper. Pull like a demon and get the right foot up to another sloper just below the crack. After that, things should ease off; it looked like there might even be footholds and everything!

The next half hour was: Try the move, hand jam fails, fall off into space. Curse. The nearest bolt is a metre below the crack so I am now hanging below the crack. Haul on the rope, regain the crack. Repeat.

Finally I had to accept that I was never going to do the move, and that if I got anymore tired I would not be able to get back either.

With a shout to the other two to warn them I was on the way back, I swiftly traversed back to where I could do a long swing on the rope to grab the quick-draw nearest the arête. I got it on the second attempt, climbed back around and clambered back down to the belay.

Apparently, I was as white as a sheet. Not surprising as I was completely exhausted and all three of us were getting badly dehydrated.

I passed over the gear to ChrisW, as the only other fit leader, and he disappeared out of sight round the arête. Time was pressing and he quickly followed the ropes to the crux move and did what I should have done – placed two pieces of gear and aided up it.

It did not seem to take him long before he was established on the belay at the far end.

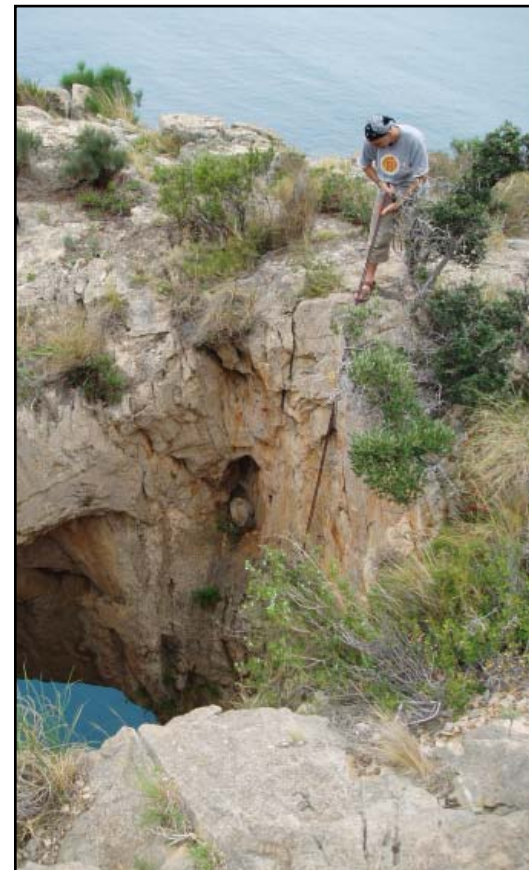
We decided that Adrian should go next, since that would allow me the most time to get my strength back. He clips into the middle of one of the ropes, ChrisW has him on belay at one end, and I put him on belay at my end. The idea of this was to limit the swing if he fell.

As Adrian, stepped around the corner, he dislodged a few stones. These fell slowly down forty metres or so and splashed into the sea.

Having tried the very first move of the traverse three or four times, Adrian realised that he simply wasn't going to be able to climb the traverse at all. At this point, I was seriously entertaining wild plans whereby I abseiled down, dropped into the sea, swam to Toix bay, walked back and top roped the other two out. A good plan, except that 1) it is at least a kilometre and I don't know the tides and currents 2) it would be dark by that time 3) I would have to carry my rock shoes and walk back wearing them 4) the ropes are only fifty metres long so would not reach the bottom anyway.

After a three way shouted discussion ChrisW tied off one of the ropes at his end and I pulled the same rope tight and clipped it into the belay at my end. This gave us a fixed rope across the traverse, and Adrian used this to do the pitch. This was a slow business, since apart from being injured; he was carrying only one prussic loop, one sling and a crab. Not forgetting that he needed to re-clip the ropes at every bolt to protect me.

Meanwhile, I was still in sunshine on the belay. Lips had reached the snake-skin stage, indicating that I really did need



the contents of that water bottle safely in my pack at the top of the cliff. I was not looking forward to round two of my battle with the traverse.

Eventually, I got the call that Adrian is at the other side. I tied on to both ropes, cleared the belay and set off around the corner again. It looked no better this time around, and now I was not strong enough to hold the jams.

After four bolts the inevitable happened, my hand slipped out of the hold and I took a long swing down and right.

Rotating slowly in space, two metres from the rock and thirty metres from the ground I could now see the other two crammed onto their belay. It looked very far away. Well, this was why we carry those prussic loops. I got them from the back of my harness and fitted them to the rope. It seemed to take an age to work back up the rope to the bolt, even as I was doing it, I was wondering how long it would take to prussic all the way back up the sixty metres abseil rope – it would have to be hours. My French prussics worked well but they tended to lock, and needed loosening after every move. I discovered that you cannot do this with your teeth.

Back on the rock, the next difficulty was to pass the bolt and aiding gear. With the rope running off to the right, getting my weight off the gear was awkward. I was still below the crack and probably couldn't hold the hand jams anyway. The only option was to use a sling to make yet another prussic, put this beyond the gear, get my weight onto it and unclip. Then of course I was pulled right, away from the gear. I remember thinking that all this would be so much easier on a vertical pitch!

I had to abandon some of the gear but as I had suspected, once past the crux the traverse eased. Footholds appeared! A few careful moves and I joined ChrisW and Adrian at the belay.

I was completely spent, needing help from the others to get safely clipped on to the cramped hanging belay. There really was not room for three people there. My feet were hurting, a fact I became aware of when Adrian used one of them as a foothold. Away up and left we could see the light fading in the entrance hole. It was getting dark out there, and we still had a pitch to go.

With three people on a hanging belay and two ropes, sorting the rope and re-rigging for the next lead was never going to be easy, and I do not think I was much help. The other two sorted it out.

I could see that all the free rope is all hanging in space, not reaching the rock below.

Without discussion, ChrisW took the lead again and set off into the gathering gloom. I concentrated on feeding the rope up to Adrian on belay. This pitch is sparsely bolted and the route is not obvious. ChrisW was having trouble finding the way up, and having to do it against the clock, in fading light did not help at all.

Eventually, he located the elusive bolt, clipped it and stepped left. Below, we were willing him on. He disappeared from sight briefly, then re-appeared climbing swiftly up to the hole. We saw him briefly outlined against the lighter sky as he topped out. I do not remember being more pleased to see someone finish a pitch.

The end was in sight now, which was more than you can say for our immediate surroundings. ChrisW tied off one of the ropes, and Adrian set off using it for aid. He practically ran up the pitch, barely pausing to unclip the bolts.

My turn and time to clear the belay. The hard bit was finding it! Of all the colours available, why did we have to use a black sling to rig it? And the knots had all had three times body weight on them.

I climbed out in Braille, unable to see my feet let alone the footholds. I was pleased to discover that it is possible to find the holds entirely by feel. There was helpful advice from above – "Follow the rope!"

Tension on the rope took me across left from the second bolt where presumably there is a foothold somewhere. After that the handholds are substantial.

Topping out was strange, I was too tired to feel anything much. After scrambling out past ChrisW and promising to buy him a beer, the next priority was to find my pack and drink the entire contents of my water bottle; a litre of water in about thirty seconds. Meanwhile Adrian had retrieved the abseil rope, and even more importantly, succeeded in finding which rock he had hidden the car keys under – no mean feat in the dark. We called in to tell the rest of the team we were OK.

For the first time in living memory I was not carrying a head torch and neither were the others, so the walk back involved a lot of scrambling over rocks and encounters with thorn bushes.

We got back to the car at Toix West at about 19:00 pm. Later we met up with Mike (who had done the route the previous day). We not too gently suggested that he had conspired to sandbag us. Mike listened carefully, and gave his opinion – "You bunch of *****! You were on the wrong route!"

What! The topo was grabbed and consulted. Ah yes. It appears we were on Captain Barbossa, and that evil middle pitch goes at 7a. And that is when it is dry. Bugger.

Back at the OrangeHouse, Rich and Sam were sufficiently impressed that when they had stopped laughing, they very kindly made us the award of the "Gripper Clipper – awarded to person or persons for services to comedy while climbing". A proud moment; Sam even took a photograph for the web site.

And I still have not climbed Parle.

Chris Haynes
Warwick Climbing Club, November 2007.



THE TOWER CLIMBING CENTRE - LEICESTER

There are three climbing areas, "The Tower" 15m lead wall, "The Bouldering Wall" with an Arch & Cave and "The Bloc" 8 m training room with 12 bottom ropes in-situ. The centre boasts over 200 established routes from F4 to F8b+, a total surface area of 600m2 and provides a unique and friendly base for the teaching of rock climbing in all its forms.

Opening Times:	Weekdays	12:00 - 22:00
	Saturday	10:00 - 17:30
	Sundays	10:00 - 16:00*
	(*closed May - September on Sundays)	
Cost:	Casual Peak	- £5.50
	Concession	- £3.90
	Casual Off Peak	- £3.85
	Concession	- £2.60
	Casual Lunchtime	- £2.55
	Concession	- £2.05
	Casual BMC Member	- £3.70
	Equipment Hire Available	
Web Address:	www.thetowerclimbingcentre.co.uk	
	enquiries@thetowerclimbingcentre.co.uk	

THE BEAR ROCK - WARWICK

The Bendcrete-built facility - open to both members of the University and the general public offers indoor climbing of a regional status. Indeed the Bear Rock has hosted a round of the British Indoor Climbing Championships on several occasions, and regularly hosts rounds of the British Youth Championships. Routes are changed on a regular basis and top class route setters are used on the main competition/lead wall.

Opening Times:	Weekdays	07:30 hrs - 21:30 hrs
	Saturdays	09:00 hrs - 17:30 hrs
	Sundays	10:00 hrs - 19:30 hrs
Cost:	Weekdays	£6.10
	Weekends	£4.95
	Children Under 18 anytime	£4.00
	NUS/UB40 Card Holders	
	- before 17:00hrs	£4.00
	- after 17:00hrs	£6.10
	Equipment Hire Available	

Web Address: www.warwick.ac.uk/services/sportscentre/bear_rock

WOLF MOUNTAIN CLIMBING CENTRE - WOLVERHAMPTON

Good selection of featured walls and some mildly overhanging technical walls with good route setting. All the routes are topoped; though if you want to lead you can but bring your own quickdraws. New boulder room open, also a stamina tunnel, 12 meters of continual roof climbing at 35 degrees plus 13 rung campus board) Also planning permission being sought to build through the roof for a large lead wall.

Opening Times:	Mon to Thurs	10:00 hrs - 22:00 hrs
	Friday	10:00 hrs - 20:00 hrs
	Saturday	10:00 hrs - 18:00 hrs
	Sunday	10:00 hrs - 20:00 hrs
	Bank Hol's	10:00 hrs - 18:00 hrs
Cost:	Adults Peak	- £6.00
	Jnr (u16) & Nus	- £5.00
	Adult Off Peak	- £5.00
	Jnr(u16) & NUS	- £4.00
	(off peak times 10am - 4pm - Monday-Friday)	
	Registration	- £6.00
	Climbers wishing to use the wall must have registered before climbing.	

Web Address: www.wolfmountain.co.uk
Email: info@wolfmountain.co.uk

CREATION CLIMBING CENTRE - BIRMINGHAM

Here at Creation we have a variety of different angles and volumes for you to master your bouldering skills as well as training on our: finger boards, campus board, circuit board and of course the famous moon wall. Currently open are 28 bottom roped walls and 23 lead walls totaling 146 climbs ranging from F3 - F7c+.

Opening Times:	Weekdays	10:00 - 22:00
	Weekends	10:00 - 19:00
Cost:	Adult Peak	- £6.75
	Adult Off Peak	- £5.75
	Concession Peak	- £5.30
	Concession Off Peak	- £4.30
Web Address: www.creationwall.co.uk		
Email: creationwall@gmail.com		

RED POINT CLIMBING CENTRE - BIRMINGHAM

Redpoint Climbing Centre has a huge variety of routes at every grade from 2+ to 8b. The many different angles offer some of the most interesting climbing that you'll ever find indoors: arêtes, grooves, arches and those famous stalactites. With a reputation for great routes, helpful staff and a friendly atmosphere, Redpoint caters for climbers of all ages and abilities.

Two dedicated bouldering areas have over a hundred easily identifiable problems and bouldering circuits for every level.

The much renowned Rock On climbing shop is on-site, offering great service and vast array of all manner of climbing gear.

All types of instruction are available; beginner and refresher courses, kids and family groups, NICAS, schools and youth groups and even advanced climbing coaching and qualifications provided by expert instructors.

Opening Times:	Weekdays	12:00 - 22:00
	Weekends	10:00 - 18:00
	Bank Hol's	10:00 - 22:00
Cost:	Annual Registration	£2.00
	Adult Peak	- £6.50
	Adult Off Peak	- £5.50
	Concession Peak	- £5.00
	Concession Off Peak	- £4.00
Instruction Prices:	Adult (per hour)	£15.00
	Concession (per hour)	£7.50

Web Address: www.redpointclimbingcentre.co.uk

Email: info@redpointclimbingcentre.co.uk

If you would like to help out with this leaflet, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please send any Club information, events or photo's or Climbing Wall information, events or photo's through to:

iaian.a.mckenzie@btinternet.com



Redpoint celebrates Six Month Anniversary!

Redpoint's doors have been swinging back and forth for six months now, and West Midlands climbers are buzzing over the great routes, assorted shapes and angles and friendly atmosphere to be found there.

To mark the occasion (look they just enjoy having parties, OK?) Redpoint are offering BMC members the chance to join for free. Rock up anytime in the month of August, wave your BMC membership card and they'll waive the annual membership charge, so you just pay the entry fee to enjoy some of the best climbing in the Midlands.

With over 24 arêtes, 18 grooves and corners, three arches, two cracklines, 12 or so roofs and two enormous stalactites, the scope for setting imaginative routes across a whole range of grades is massive, so climbers of all abilities can easily find ways to try out new moves and gain in skill and strength.

Every inch of available space has been used effectively, providing a bright, welcoming space where the 3-dimensional routes consistently surprise and challenge users - weaving from panel to panel, swinging underneath arches and sneaking round corners.

51 lines up to 12.5m high offer a potential 193 routes spanning F2+ to F8b. Boulders are equally well catered for with a fantastic purpose built bouldering wall co-designed by Entreprises and the fiendishly tricky Cave area offering problems from V0 to V10.

Feedback from Redpoint's regulars has been enthusiastic, with praise for well thought out routes and grades which accurately reflect outdoor climbing. The climbing press has been equally positive; Climb magazine has featured Redpoint in a two page spread, while Summit magazine has singled out the geometric panel construction as a model for the way future climbing walls should be developed.

NICAS

Interest is growing from local schools and youth groups too, particularly following the launch of the new National Indoor Climbing Award Scheme (NICAS). The Tower Climbing Centre in Leicester is the East Midlands primary centre and Redpoint is West Midlands' primary centre for the national logbook system, which gives school and scout groups as well as the Rock Monkeys kids' club an opportunity to develop indoor climbing skills, keep a record of their achievements and gain certificates as they progress through five skill levels.

The scheme is proving extremely popular and the first students were awarded their Level 1 & 2 certificates recently to general applause.

The National Indoor Climbing Achievement Scheme (NICAS) is a UK wide scheme designed to promote climbing development and accredit individual achievement on artificial climbing structures. It can be used as a starting point for people wishing to take up climbing and mountaineering. It is open to all candidates aged 7 and upwards.

Every week thousands of people climb indoors and outdoors on purpose built artificial climbing walls. For many the climbing wall is their first introduction to the absorbing world of climbing. The Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC) is concerned that high standards should be encouraged early on in a participant's climbing career so that both safety and enjoyment can be maximised to the full.

The National Indoor Climbing Achievement Scheme will provide the structure and motivation for new climbers to develop their skills in order that they may gain the most out of their climbing as well as having their achievements recognised.

Aims of the Scheme

- to develop climbing movement skills and improve levels of ability.
- to learn climbing rope-work and how to use equipment appropriately.
- to develop risk assessment and risk management skills in the sport.
- to work as a team, communicate with, and trust a climbing partner.
- to provide a structure for development, motivation and improved performance.
- to develop an understanding of the sport, it's history and future challenges.
- to provide a record of personal achievement.
- to point the way to further disciplines and challenges in climbing beyond the scheme.

Structure of the Scheme

The scheme comprises five levels of award aimed at complete novices to expert climbers. The scheme is split into two parts and takes a minimum of 100 hours to complete in its entirety. Part 1 contains levels 1 and 2 and Part 2 contains Levels 3 to 5. Upon registering with an Awarding Centre candidates receive a log booklet for Part 1 and a log folder for Part 2. After achieving each level they are awarded with a certificate on behalf of the ABCTT. The five levels are:

1. Foundation Climber

An entry level aimed at novices that recognises their ability to climb safely under supervision.

2. Top Rope Climber

Aimed at promoting good practice in climbing and bouldering unsupervised on an artificial wall.

3. Technical Climber

A more advanced top roping and bouldering level that focuses on developing technique and movement skills.

4. Lead Climber

Concentrates on the skills required to both lead climb and belay a lead climber.

5. Advanced Climber

The top level that focuses on improving performance, a deeper understanding of climbing systems and the wider world of climbing.

